

ANC



NO. 31

TIM HOLT

A.K.O.'S WESTERN STAR

10c





WEB COMIC
UNIVERSE.COM

KNOW YOUR AIRLINES!

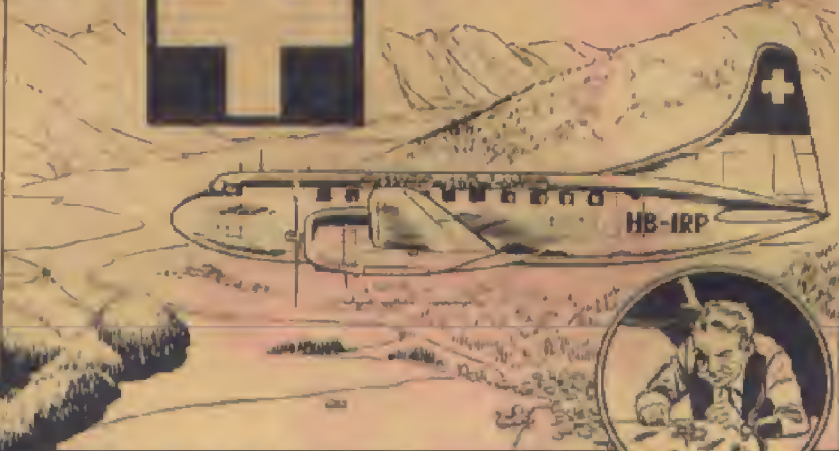
PRECISION ROUTES



TO EVERYWHERE

SWISSAIR, SWITZERLAND'S GREAT INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE, MIRRORS THE SOLID CHARACTERISTICS OF THAT STURDY ALPINE NATION. FOR OVER TEN GENERATIONS, THE SWISS HAVE HAD A REPUTATION FOR MAKING AND SERVICING PRECISION PRODUCTS EQUALLED BY FEW AND SURPASSED BY NONE.

THE SAME TECHNICAL SKILL AND MECHANICAL APTITUDE THAT PRODUCES THE WORLD'S BEST WATCHES HAS GONE INTO THE BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE OF **SWISSAIR'S** SUPERB AIR TRANSPORT SYSTEM...

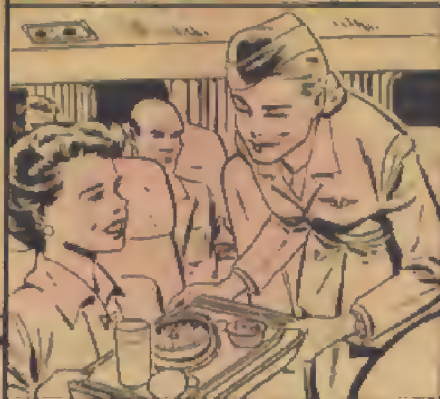


AS A COMPANY, **SWISSAIR** IS OVER TWENTY YEARS OLD, BUT IN ITS OPERATIONS IT DRAWS ON OVER THIRTY YEARS EXPERIENCE IN COMMERCIAL AIR TRANSPORTATION. INHERITING THE EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL OF THE **AD ASTRA** AIRLINE WHICH WAS FORMED IN 1919 IN ZURICH AND OF **BALAIR** FOUNDED IN 1925 IN BASEL, **SWISSAIR** WAS BORN THROUGH THE FUSION OF THESE TWO COMPANIES IN 1931.

SWISSAIR WAS THE FIRST EUROPEAN AIRLINE TO USE AN AMERICAN-BUILT PLANE, THE LOCKHEED "ORION" IN 1932. LATER, THE COMPANY WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO USE THE DOUGLAS DC-2 AND DC-3. THUS **SWISSAIR** HAS ASSISTED IN ACQUAINTING SWITZERLAND AND THE REST OF EUROPE WITH THE QUALITY OF AMERICAN AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURE.



TYPICAL OF **SWISSAIR'S** THOROUGHNESS IS THE RECENT INSTANCE WHERE THE COMPANY INTERVIEWED AND TESTED 300 APPLICANTS IN ORDER TO SELECT JUST THIRTY HOSTESSES FOR TRAINING.



ON AUGUST 19, 1951, **SWISSAIR** ADDED THE DOUGLAS DC-6B TO THEIR TRANSATLANTIC SCHEDULE BETWEEN NEW YORK AND ZURICH, CUTTING THE FLYING TIME BETWEEN THESE CITIES TO A NEW LOW OF 14 HOURS. **SWISSAIR** WAS THE FIRST CARRIER TO USE THESE PLANES OVER THE ATLANTIC; AND ON JANUARY 31, 1952, A **SWISSAIR** DC-6B SET A NEW WORLD FLYING RECORD BETWEEN NEW YORK AND GENEVA—10 HOURS AND 27 MINUTES. THE **SWISSAIR** DC-6B ALSO SET A NEW OCEAN-CROSSING RECORD FOR COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT—4 HOURS AND 36 MINUTES—ONLY 17 MINUTES SHORT OF THE FASTEST CROSSING TO DATE, RECENTLY MADE BY A **JET** PLANE.



TIM HOLT

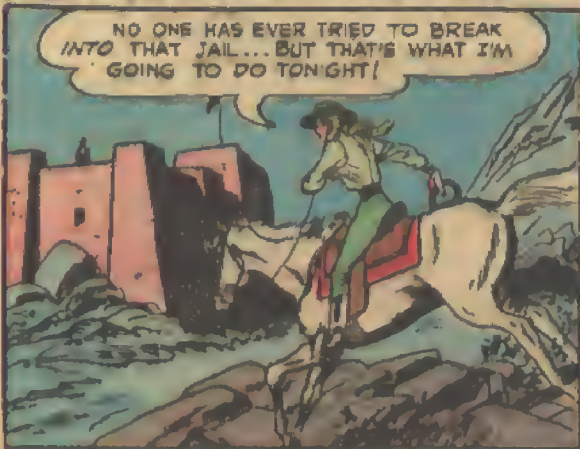
TIM HOLT

THEY CAME HUNTING HIM,
THE THREE MOST DANGEROUS
CRIMINALS IN THE ENTIRE
SOUTHWEST! THE MAN OF
1000 FACES!... THE
SCARECROW!... THE
WHIP WOMAN! ALL OF
THEM WANTED HIS DEATH!
EACH OF THEM WAS PREPARED
TO OFFER HIS OWN LIFE
IF NEED BE, TO BRING ABOUT—

"THE THREE DEATHS OF RED MASK!"



THE PALING MOON WEAKLY TINTS THE ADOBE WALLS
OF THE TERRITORIAL JAIL. IN THE FAINT BRILLIANCE
A SLIM FIGURE MOVES WITH LIGHTNING SPEED —



A WHIP COMES SNAKING OUT OF THE DARKNESS
TO COIL AROUND THE THROAT OF A DOZING GUARD.



TIM HOLT

I MUST SEE THE **MAN OF 1000 FACES** AND **THE SCARECROW!** — GREAT CRIMINAL BRAINS, BOTH OF THEM! AND THEY ARE BOTH FAMILIAR WITH **REDMASK'S** METHODS...



MOMENTS LATER, A MASTER KEY GRATES IN A CELL DOOR —

WHO'S THERE?

SHHH! IT'S **THE WHIP WOMAN** WITH **THE SCARECROW**, WHOM I FREED FROM HIS CELL!



YOU BOTH HAVE BEEN IN HERE SOME TIME — PUT HERE BY **REDMASK!** YOU'VE HAD TIME TO THINK. TELL ME HOW I CAN ROB THE **BULLET BANK** IN SUCH A WAY THAT **REDMASK** WILL NEVER CATCH ME!



FOR A SHORT WHILE, UNTIL THE FIRST FAINT STREAKS OF RED DAWN COAT THE CACTUS COUNTRY, THREE VOICES WHISPER IN THE DEPTHS OF THE TERRITORIAL JAIL. THEN —

MY PLANS ARE MADE!
I CANNOT FAIL!



BEHIND HER —

SHE'S GONE — AND SHE LEFT THE CELL DOOR OPEN!

WELL? WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR? WE, TOO, SEEK TO KEEP A DATE WITH **REDMASK** — A DATE OF DEATH!



REDMASK WILL NEVER KNOW THE MAN WHO STRIKES HIM DOWN. IN ONE OF MY 1000 DISGUISES, I WILL FIND AND SLAY HIM!

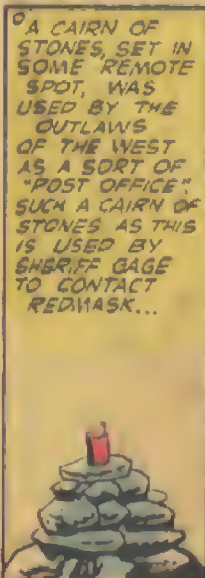
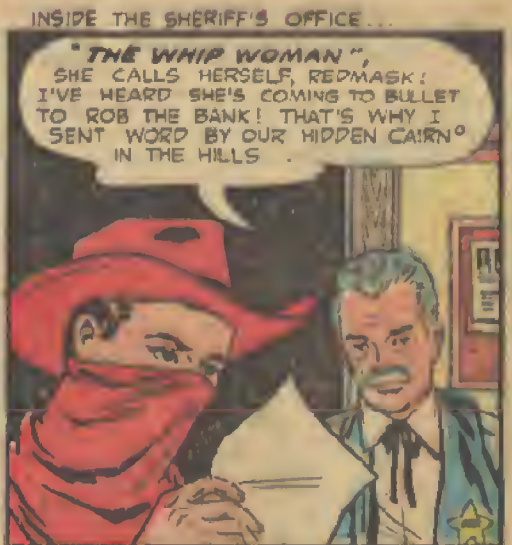
YOU'LL HAVE TO BEAT ME TO IT THEN! I, TOO, INTEND TO KILL **REDMASK!**



TIM HOLT

DAYS LATER, AN OLD PROSPECTOR, HIS CLOTHES SHREDDED AND DUSTY, WALKS THE LONG TRAIL LEADING INTO BULLET...

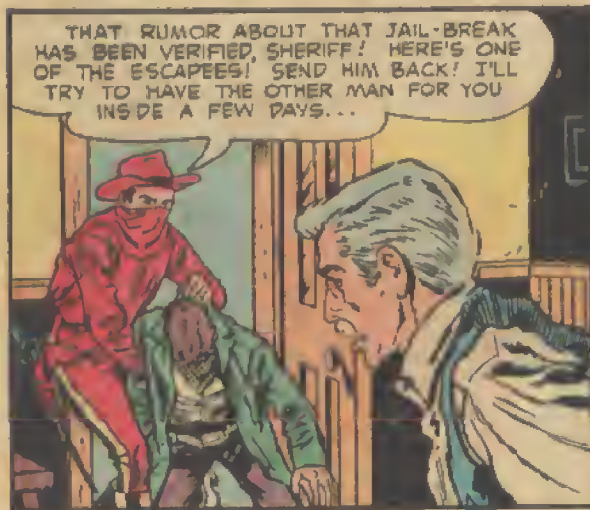
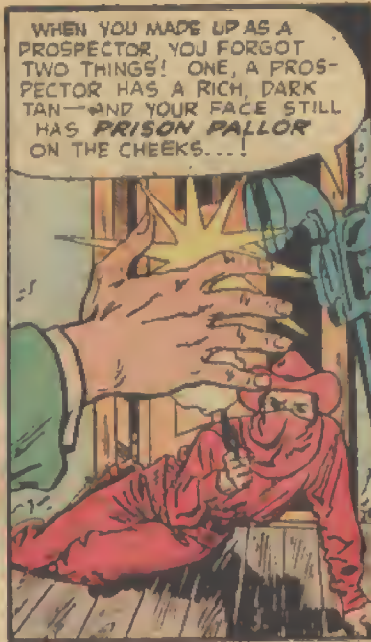
FOR A WEEK, THE OLD PROSPECTOR SITS IN THE SUNLIGHT, AIMLESSLY WHITTILING. ONE MORNING...



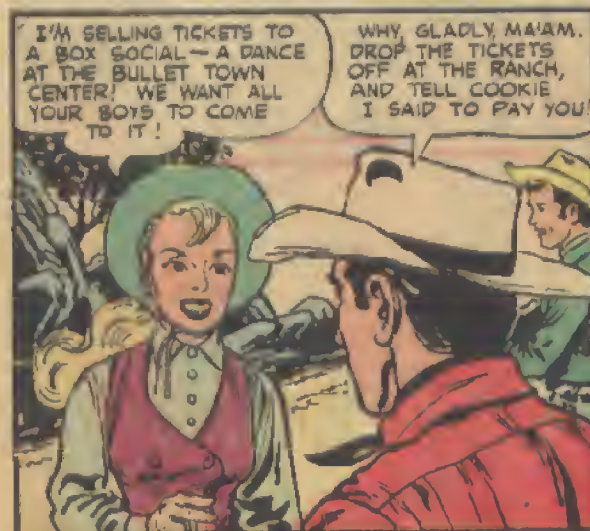
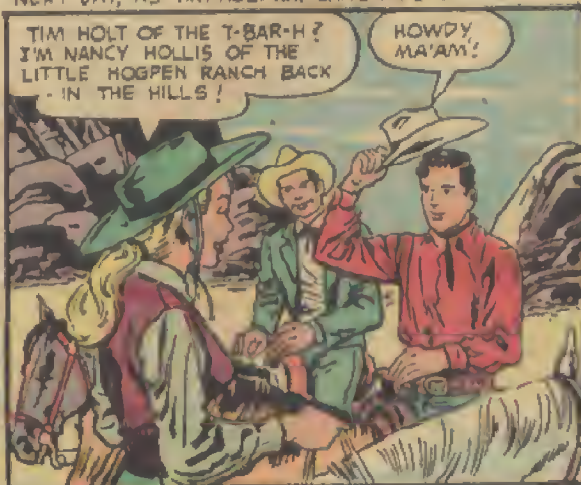
AS REDMASK LEAVES THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE, A GUN LEVELS GRIMLY, ITS BARREL POINTED AT HIS CHEST...



TIM HOLT



NEXT DAY, AS TIM HOLT AND CHITO RIDE TO TOWN...



BOY SOCIALS ARE A REGULAR PART OF WESTERN RANCH LIFE: DANCES WHERE LUNCHES ARE PUT UP IN BOXES AND BID FOR BY THE MEN, TO BE SHARED WITH THEIR LADIES FAIR, ALWAYS LEND A TOUCH OF INTEREST...

—ESPECIALLY IF A MISTAKE IS MADE!

I AM BID TEN DOLLARE!
SOLD TO CHITO JOSE GONZALES BUSTAMONTE RAFFERTY!

OLA! THAT EES NOT THEE BOX I PACKED, CHITO!
IT ISN'T?



EET EES MY BOX LUNCH! COME CHITO!
SO-HO! CARMELITA DIEGO! YOU HAF YOUR EYE ON MY CHITO JOSE GONZALES BUSTAMONTE RAFFERTY FOR A LONG TIME!

I SCRATCH THOSE EYES OUT SO THEY DON'T SEE MY CHITO ANY MORE!
YOUR TONGUE EES LIKE DAGGER—LONG AND POINTY AND SKINNY! I POOL EET OUT!

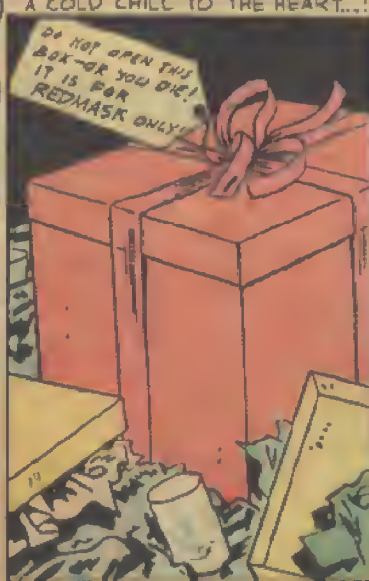


LAUGHING MEN PULL THE FIGHTING LADIES APART, AND THE DANCE GOES ON...

THERE IS ONE ENORMOUS BOX THAT REMAINS UNOPENED—FOR THE WORDS ON THE TAG BRINGS A COLD CHILL TO THE HEART...

TOWARD THE END OF THE DANCE, CONVERSATION CEASES. ALL EYES TURN TOWARD A GRIMON-CLAD FIGURE—

WHERE EES THAT CHITO? I WEEL FIX HEEM NOW!
SI! WHERE EES HE?
HE WENT OFF WITH SOME OTHER GAL, LADIES!



TIM HOLT



WONDER WHAT TASTY TIDBIT SOME KIND PERSON PREPARED?



I'M THAT TIDBIT, REDMASK! I PREPARED—
DEATH!

THE SCARECROW!

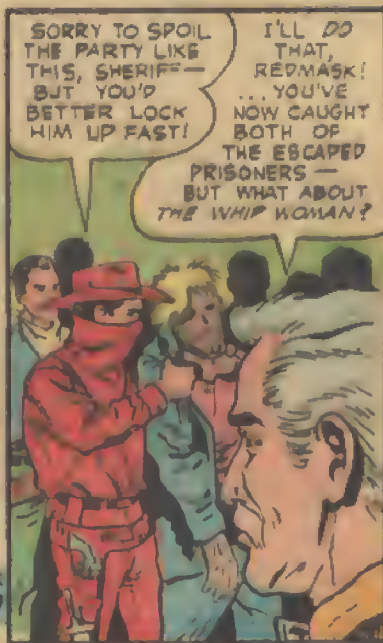


YOU WERE DOUBLED UP IN THAT BOX SO LONG YOUR EYES WERE UNACUSTOMED TO ALL THIS LIGHT, SCARECROW! FOR THAT SPLIT SECOND I NEEDED—I'M GRATEFUL!

GNGG!



YOU CAN GET IN AND OUT OF TIGHT PLACES BECAUSE YOU'RE TRIPLE-JOINTED— BUT YOU CAN'T SLIP OUT OF THIS...!



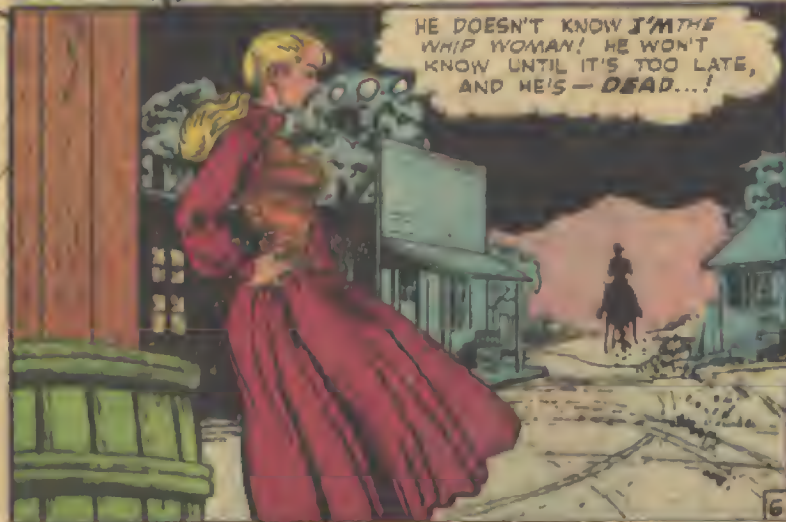
SORRY TO SPOIL THE PARTY LIKE THIS, SHERIFF— BUT YOU'D BETTER LOCK HIM UP FAST!

I'LL DO THAT, REDMASK! ... YOU'VE NOW CAUGHT BOTH OF THE ESCAPED PRISONERS — BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WHIP WOMAN?



FORGET ABOUT CRIMINALS, REDMASK! —EVEN SUCH PRETTY CRIMINALS AS THE WHIP WOMAN— AND DANCE WITH ME!

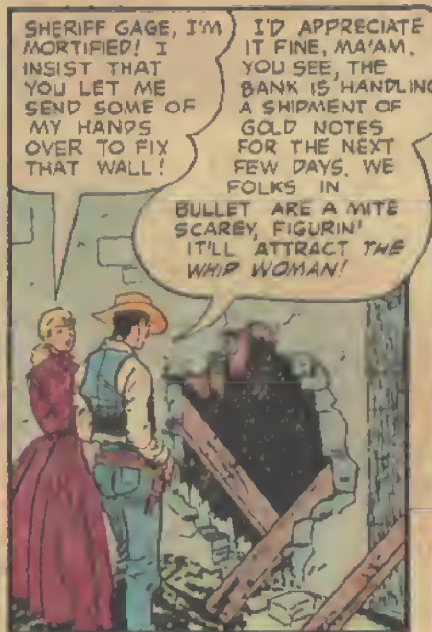
I'M SORRY, MA'AM! I CAN'T STAY FOR FUN — NOT WITH THE WHIP WOMAN SOMEWHERE IN THESE PARTS!



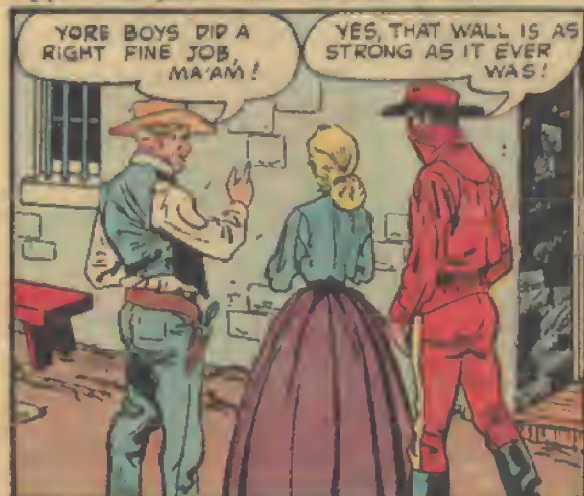
HE DOESN'T KNOW I'M THE WHIP WOMAN! HE WON'T KNOW UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE, AND HE'S — DEAD...!

TIM HOLT

NEXT DAY, AS "NANCY HOLLIS" DRIVES THROUGH TOWN...



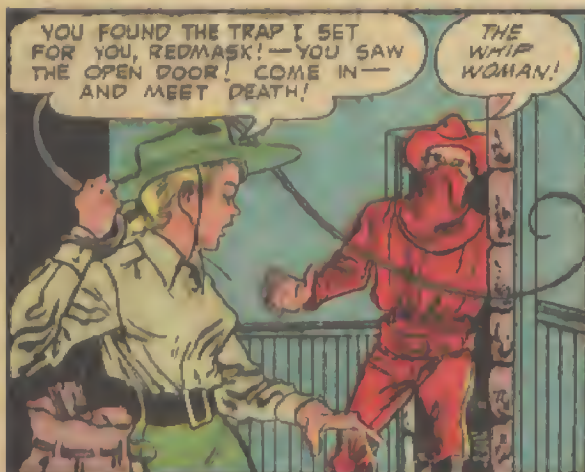
SOON THE BANK WALL IS AS GOOD AS NEW—



BUT THAT NIGHT, THE WHIP WOMAN RIDES INTO TOWN...



TIM HOLT



CHANGES
AUTOMATICALLY
A DAY

Amazing Swiss Invention!
**CHRONOGRAPH
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- ☐ TIMES PULSE BEATS

Also measures DISTANCE covered by plane, car, altitude, etc. & yes all this and it's an AUTOMATIC CALENDAR too! The date pops up in the tiny window every day! Easy to operate with 2 main buttons. One to start another to stop which ever you wants this timer watch! Students, doctors, aviation, hunters, race cars, sportsmen, photographers and all other actions!

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WASH. - CALIFORNIA CHRONOGRAPH: MAPS ON 10 DAY HOME TRIAL. One of the
 maps I am also getting sent to you which includes all possible for the - NOT 1. The
 MAPS of the Ireland and Scotland. I will return MAPS within 10 days for complete
 release of your own press.

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1900
 1901
 1902

HAVE MORE AND GET MORE Good cash on money order for \$4.00. Please call
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 PAY down on all cash orders same MONEY BACK GUARANTEE! Full instructions
 and terms enclosed

TIM HOLT

TIM HOLT

THEY ROPE THE PLAINS ALL CLAD IN BLACK, THESE KILLERS WHOM NO KNIFE OR BULLET COULD HARM! THEY RODE THROUGH A HAIL OF HOT LEAD AND LIVED! THEY ROBBED AND LOOTED—AND WHEN REDMASK TOOK THE TRAIL AFTER THEM, HE DISCOVERED THAT NO MATTER HOW HE SHOT THEM, THEY WOULD NOT DIE! FOR THESE WERE—

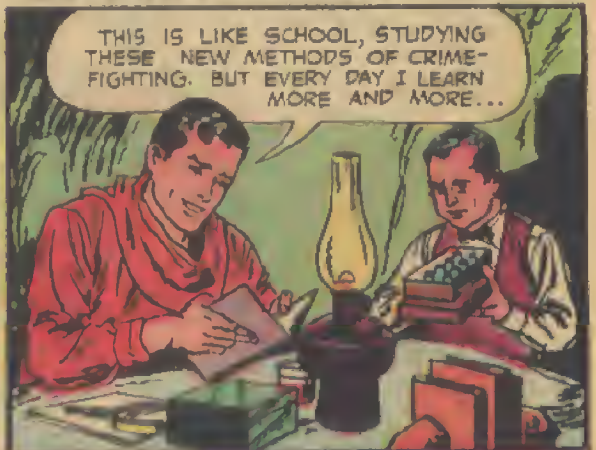
"THE DEATHLESS RIDERS!"



DRAWN BY FRANK BOLLE

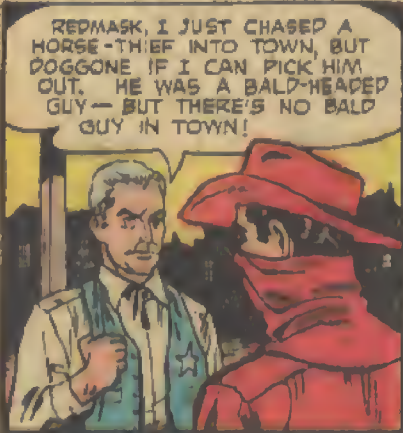
SOME MONTHS BEFORE, IN PURSUING THE MAN OF 1000 FACES, A DETECTIVE FROM THE FRENCH SURETE—PAUL CALVERT—LANDED IN AMERICA, ONLY TO DIE IN TIM HOLT'S ARMS...

AND SO TIM, AS REDMASK, TOOK THE SCIENCE LABORATORY, AND FOUND A SECRET CAVE, AND THERE HE STORED THE RETORTS AND VIALS—



TIM HOLT

ONE AFTERNOON IN TOWN, REDMASK GETS THE CHANCE TO SHOW WHAT HIS NEW-FOUND SCIENCE CAN DO...



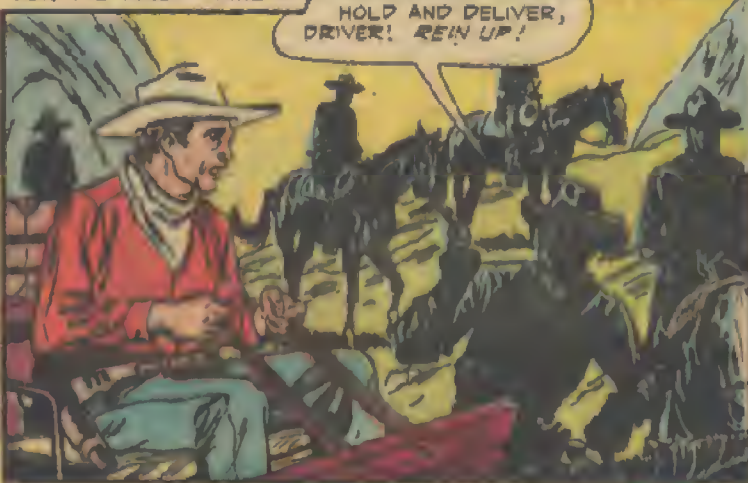
MOVING QUICKLY FROM MAN TO MAN, REDMASK MAKES CAREFUL CUTTINGS OF THEIR HAIR...



MOMENTS LATER AFTER REDMASK HAS MADE TESTS IN HIS PORTABLE LABORATORY



SOME DAYS LATER, THE WEIRD **DEATHLESS RIDERS** STRUCK FOR THE FIRST TIME...



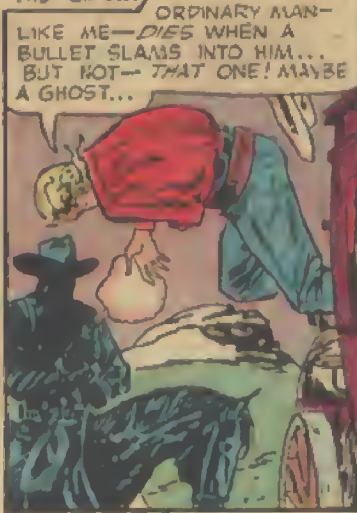
AS THE GUARD TOSSED DOWN HIS RIFLE, HE DREW HIS COLT —



TIM HOLT



AND THEN A SIXGUN BLASTS, AND THE GUARD DIES WITH HIS AMAZEMENT STILL FRAMED ON HIS LIPS a.



A MOMENT LATER, AND THE TRANSFER IS MADE. WITH A FORTUNE IN THE WELLS-FARGO BOX AT HIS FEET, A BLACK-ROBED ROBBER LAUGHS HARSHLY ..



AGAIN AND AGAIN THE DEATHLESS RIDERS STRIKE! THEY HOLD UP THE UNION PACIFIC —



THEY GALLOP AWAY AS RIFLES AND SIXGUNS THUNDER AT THEM —BUT NO MAN FALLS!



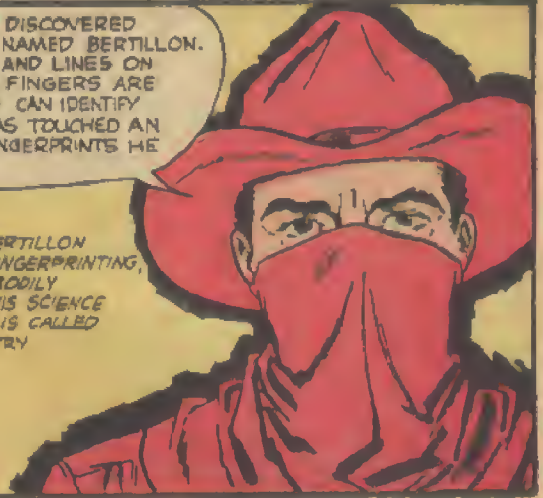
TIM HOLT

NEXT DAY, IN THE BULLET RAILROAD YARD...



A NEW SCIENCE DISCOVERED BY A FRENCHMAN NAMED BERTILLON. ALL THE WHORLS AND LINES ON THE TIPS OF OUR FINGERS ARE DIFFERENT. WE CAN IDENTIFY A PERSON WHO HAS TOUCHED AN OBJECT BY THE FINGERPRINTS HE LEAVES ON IT!

EDITOR'S NOTE: BERTILLON NOT ONLY USED FINGERPRINTING, BUT ALSO OTHER BODYLY MEASUREMENTS. THIS SCIENCE OF IDENTIFICATION IS CALLED ANTHROPOMETRY



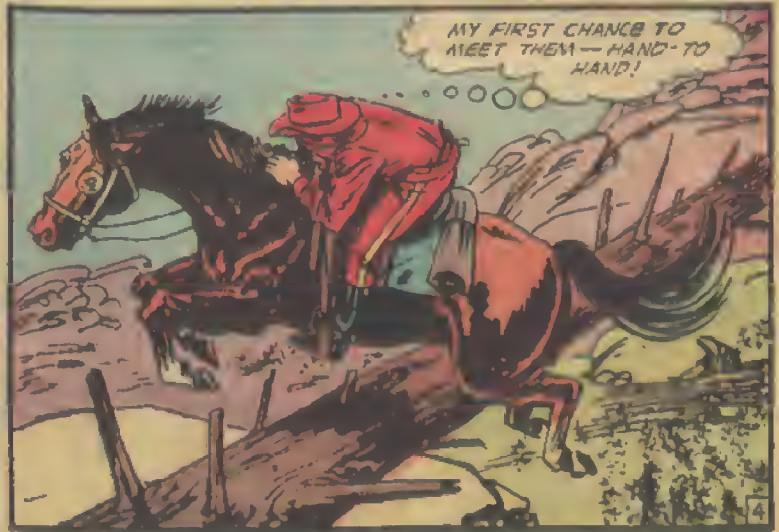
BUT THIS NEW TRICK OF TAKING THE PRINTS OF A CRIMINAL'S FINGERS PROVED ONE FACT TO REDMASK, AND TO THE LAWMAN WHO HAD CALLED HIM —

SHERIFF THE PRINTS I HAVE PHOTOGRAPHED SO FAR HAVE ALL BEEN FROM ONE MAN! THAT MEANS THAT ONLY ONE OF THOSE DEATHLESS RIDERS EVER HANDLES THE LOOT THEY STEAL...

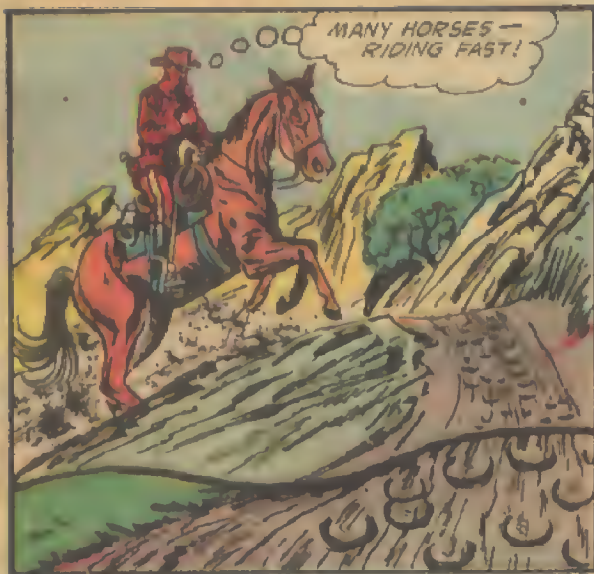
HUH! THAT DOESN'T HELP US! RECKON WE MADE A MISTAKE CALLIN' YOU IN, REDMASK!



IN THE HIGH HILLS, REDMASK PATROLS THE LONELY PATHWAYS. HERE, WHERE MOUNTAIN PEAKS TOUCH THE SKY, HE CAN SCAN THE BULLET COUNTRYSIDE FOR MILES AROUND. ONE DAY —



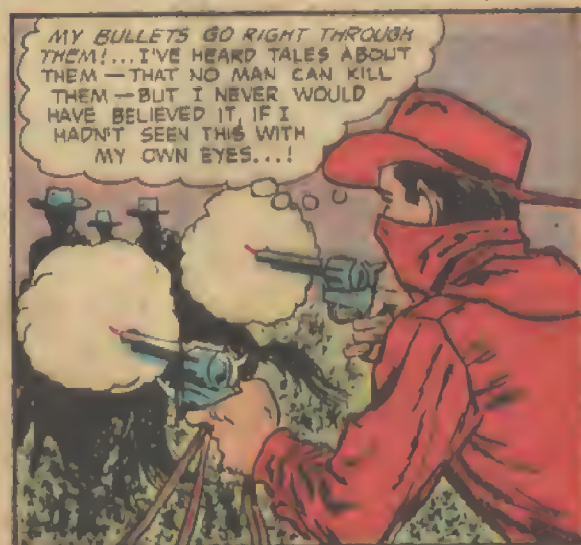
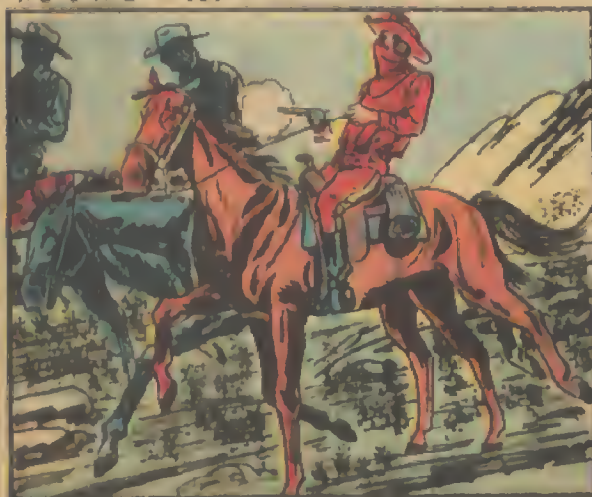
TIM HOLT



AHEAD OF REDMASK, THE BLACK-ROBED RIDERS SURROUND THE BULLET-SILVER STAGE COACH...



FIRING BOTH SIXGUNS, REDMASK HURTTLES IN AMONG THE STAGE ROBBERS...



PUZZLED AND DISMAYED, REDMASK DROPS TO THE GROUND, WHERE HIS KEEN EYES SCAN THE TELLTALE HOOFPRIINTS...



TIM HOLT

AT A STEADY PACE, REDMASK TRAILS THE DEATHLESS RIDERS. SOON HE REACHES THE CAMP OF HIS GOOD FRIEND, TAKOMA, OF THE MOUNTAIN UTES...



SOME HOURS LATER, ALONG THE NARROW, WINDING TRAIL THAT LEADS INTO THE HIGH HILLS—



A WHISTLING FIRE-ARROW BLAZES UP AND FORWARD —



AN INSTANT LATER IT SINKS TO ITS FEATHERS IN A BLACK-ROBED RIDER —

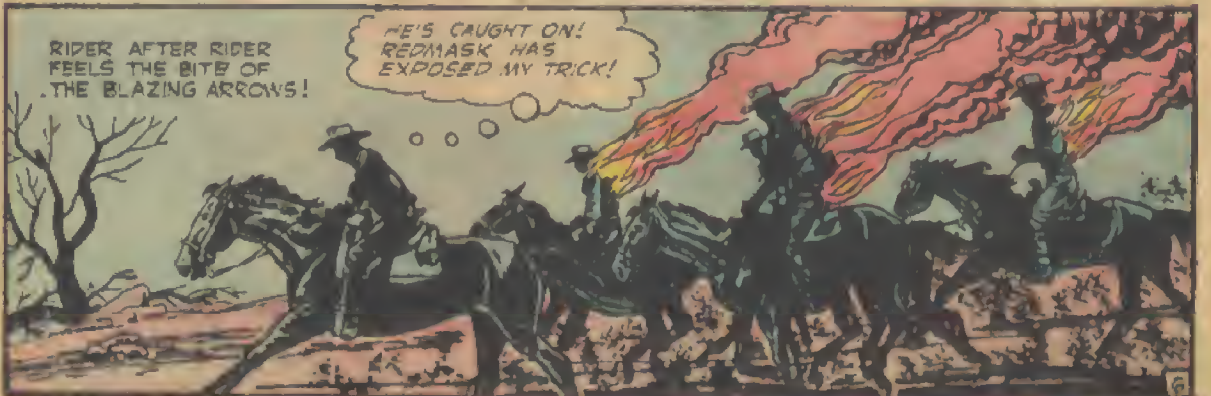


—AND THE RIDER BURSTS INTO FLAMES!



RIDER AFTER RIDER FEELS THE BITE OF THE BLAZING ARROWS!

HE'S CAUGHT ON! REDMASK HAS EXPOSED MY TRICK!



TIM HOLT

ONE RIDER ALONE REMAINS AS REDMASK CASTS ASIDE HIS BOW AND QUIVER AND TAKES UP THE PURSUIT—



IT WAS A CLEVER SCHEME, USING BLACK-ROBED DUMMIES OF STRAW! HE HAD THEM RIDE TRICK HORSES—PROBABLY CIRCUS HORSES TRAINED TO STAND AND GALLOP AT AN ORDER! HE ALONE ROBBED WHILE HIS "GANG" STOOD BY, SEEMINGLY READY TO FIGHT ANY OPPOSITION IF NEEDED!



BUT NOW, THE TRAIL NEARS ITS END!



ONE THING YET REMAINS—!



LIKE A SHOT, REDMASK CLOSES WITH THE BLACK-ROBED OUTLAW, SMASHING HIM FROM HIS SADDLE—



AT LAST—YOUR FACE! A FACE I'VE HAD TO DO SOME HARD THINKING AND FAST RIDING TO SEE!



IT'S A FACE I'M ANXIOUS TO SEE ABOVE A HANGMAN'S NOOSE—PAYING FOR THE CRIMES YOU'VE COMMITTED! NOW, LET'S RIDE....!



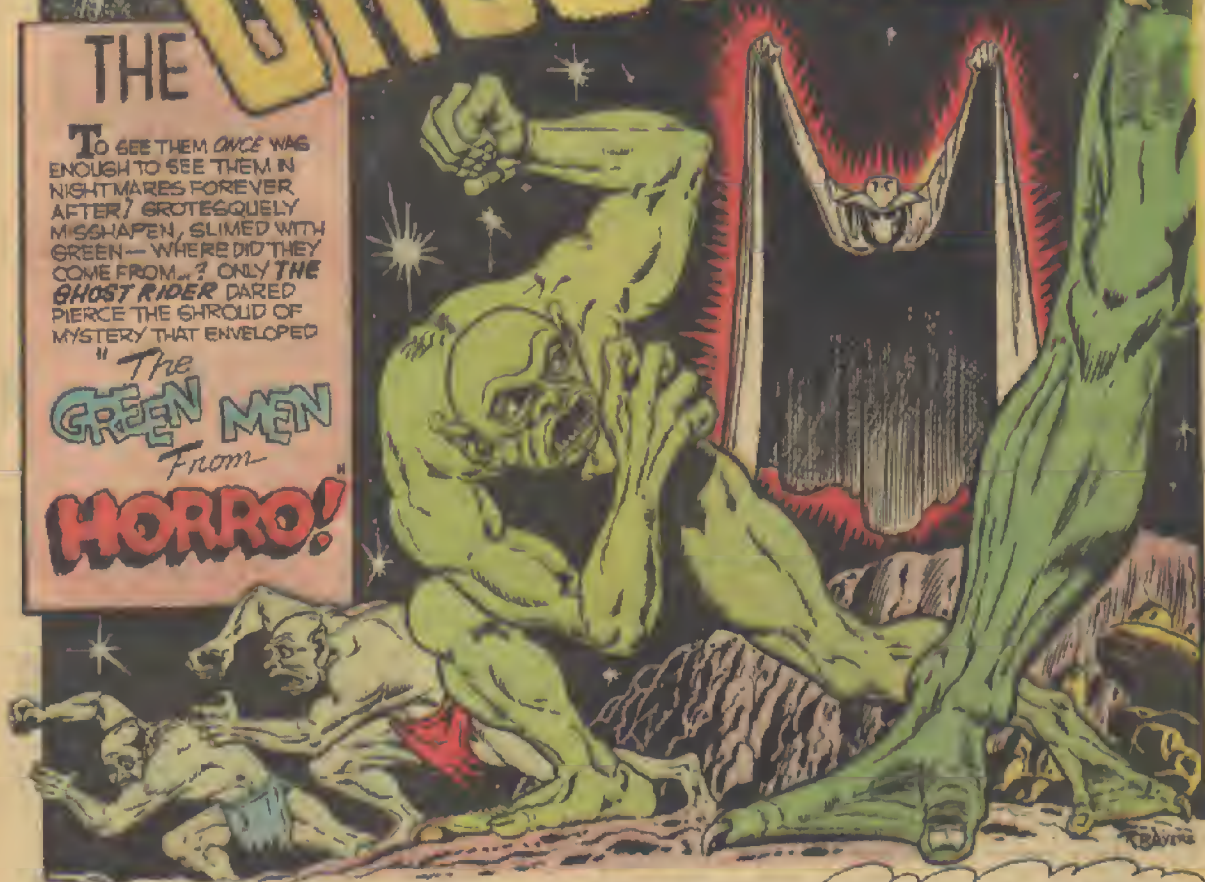
TIM HOLT

GHOST RIDER

THE

TO SEE THEM ONCE WAS
ENOUGH TO SEE THEM IN
NIGHTMARES FOREVER
AFTER! GROTESQUELY
MISCHAPEN, SLIMED WITH
GREEN — WHERE DID THEY
COME FROM...? ONLY THE
GHOST RIDER DARED
PIERCE THE SHROUD OF
MYSTERY THAT ENVELOPED

"The
GREEN MEN
From
HORRO!"

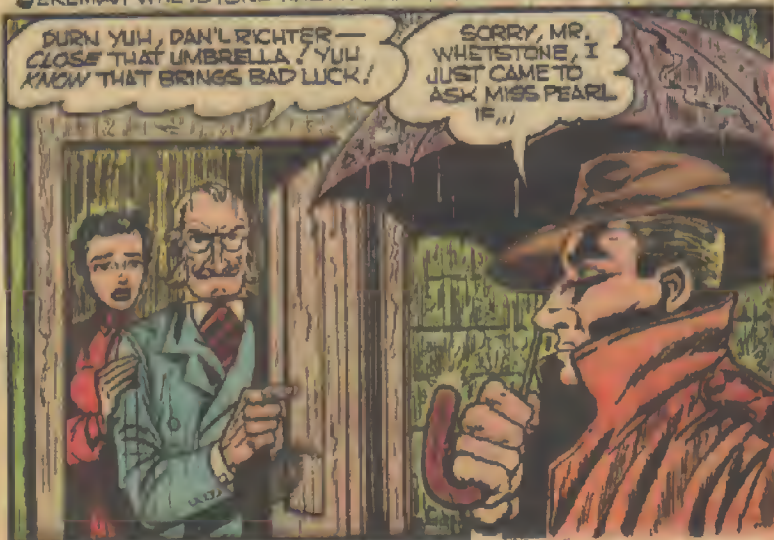


JEREMIAH WHETSTONE WAS A MISERLY AND SUPERSTITIOUS MAN —

DURN YUH, DAN'L RICHTER —
CLOSE THAT UMBRELLA! YUH
KNOW THAT BRINGS BAD LUCK!

SORRY, MR.
WHETSTONE, I
JUST CAME TO
ASK MISS PEARL
IF...

I KNOW WHAT YUH CAME FOR —
YUH WORTHLESS NO-GOOD
SCAMP! YUH'RE SPARKING MY
DAUGHTER JUST TO GIT YORE
HANDS ON MY MONEY! THUH
ANSWER'S NO! I'D AS SOON
WALK UNDER A LADDER AS HAVE
YOU FER A SON-TH-LIN!



TIM HOLT



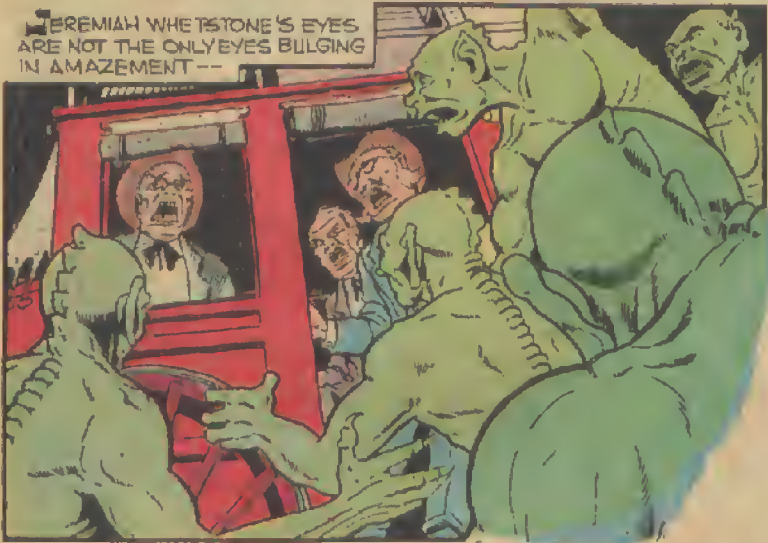
THAT SUPERSTITIOUS
OLD SKINFLINT'S
GOIN' TO LIVE TO EAT
THOSE WORDS...

A
FEW
WEEKS
LATER—

WHUT'S HOLDING
US UP, DRIVER?
I AIM TO EAT AT
HOME TO ~~NOT SAY ANY~~
MEAT!



JEREMIAH WHETSTONE'S EYES
ARE NOT THE ONLY EYES BULGING
IN AMAZEMENT --

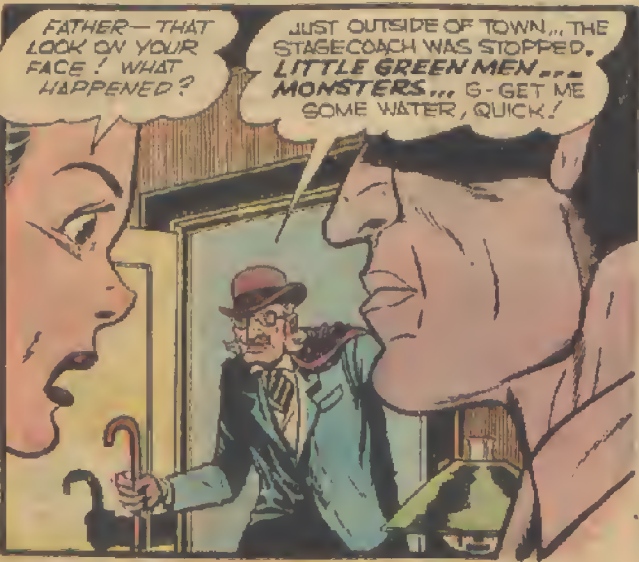


THE MOMENT OF HORROR PASSES --



MEN OR BEASTS,
WHUT EVER THEY
WERE, THEY'RE
GONE NOW!
EVERYONE
ALL RIGHT
INSIDE?

I KNEW
SUMPHTIN'D
HAPPEN -- EVER
SINCE I BROKE
THAT MIRROR
LAST WEEK...



FATHER -- THAT
LOOK ON YOUR
FACE! WHAT
HAPPENED?

JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN... THE
STAGECOACH WAS STOPPED.
**LITTLE GREEN MEN...
MONSTERS...** G-GET ME
SOME WATER, QUICK!

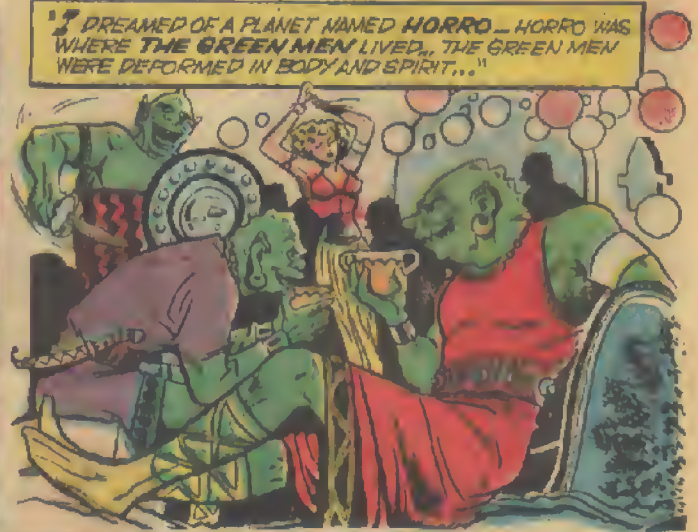


"LITTLE GREEN MEN!
MONSTERS," DAVID --
THAT'S JUST LIKE
YOUR DREAM...

TIM HOLT



SURE, I'LL TELL YOU MY DREAM, MR. WHETSTONE. BETTER SIT DOWN FIRST— IT'S PRETTY GRUESOME...!



"I DREAMED OF A PLANET NAMED HORRO... HORRO WAS WHERE THE GREEN MEN LIVED... THE GREEN MEN WERE DEFORMED IN BODY AND SPIRIT..."



"THEY FOUGHT NEEDLESS WARS..."



"THEY WANTONLY WASTED NATURE'S GIFTS..."

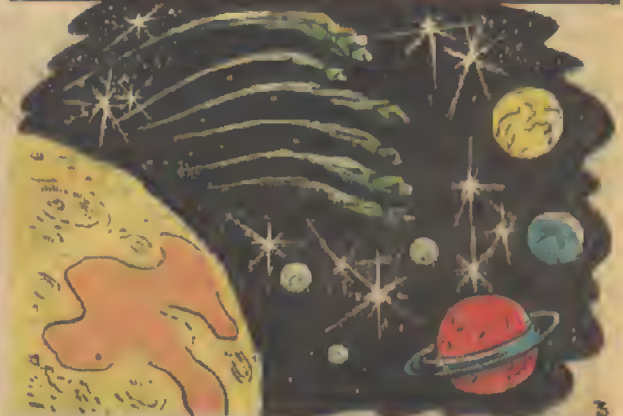


"SO EVIL WERE THEIR WAYS, THAT ONE NIGHT, ALL THE DEAD BROKE OPEN THEIR GRAVES IN REVOLT AGAINST THE WICKED LIVING..."



"THIS WAS HORRO'S LAST WAR. IT LASTED SEVEN LONG YEARS..."

"THE DEAD FINALLY WON. THEY RETURNED TO THEIR GRAVES. THE PLANET WAS DESOLATE... BUT ONE BAND OF THE GREEN MEN ESCAPED. FLYING THROUGH SPACE, THEY BEGAN SEARCHING FOR NEW WORLDS TO DESPOIL..."



TIM HOLT

THEN I REMEMBER A TERRIBLE FIRE.
THAT'S HOW MY DREAM ENDED—WITH
A VISION OF FIRE!



THE
NEXT
DAY...

I'M TELLIN' YUH -- I SAW THEM GREEN THINGS WITH
MY OWN EYES! AND THEN DAVE RICHTER TELLING
ME HIS DREAM AND PROPHECYING A BIG FIRE IN
THESE PARTS TONIGHT... WE'RE MIGHTY LUCKY
HAVING A MAN LIKE HIM AROUND...



IN ANOTHER PART OF THE TOWN—

YOU HEAR MUCH
BABBLE-BABBLE
ABOUT GREEN MEN
AND FIRE, REX?
EVERYBODY REAL
EXCITED!

SOUNDS
LIKE SO MUCH
HOGWASH
DREAMED UP
BY DAVE RI—
WHAT'S
THIS?

NO
TICKET
NO
SHIRT
ON...



YOU FIND
SOMETHING
INTELLESTING
IN NEWSPAPER,
REX?

SOMETHING
MIGHTY
INTERESTING,
SING SONG.
IN FACT,
SOMETHING
THAT MIGHT LEAD
TO THE GREEN
MEN...

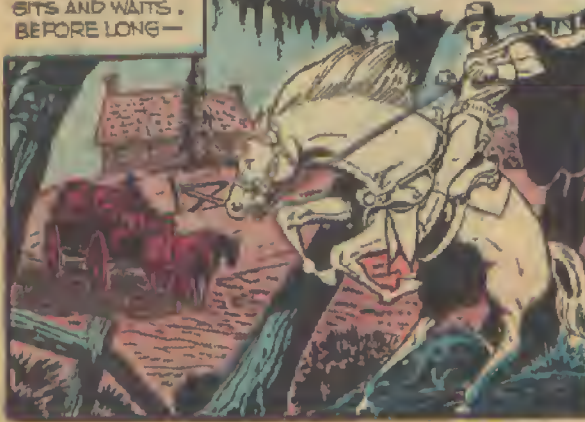


THAT NIGHT, REX
DONS THE FAMOUS
WHITE OUTFIT, AND
THE GHOST RIDER,
NEMESIS OF EVIL,
RIDES AGAIN!



PULLING REIN IN
THE SHADOW NEAR
A GLOOMY HOUSE,
THE GHOST RIDER
SITS AND WAITS.
BEFORE LONG—

PATIENCE, NOBLE
STEED, PATIENCE!
LET THEM GO BY, AND
THEN WE'LL FOLLOW!



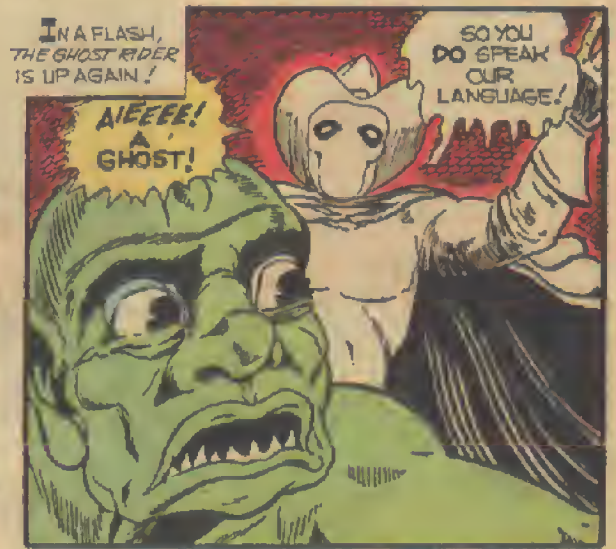
A
SHORT
TIME
LATER—

HEH-HEH
HEH-HEH...

THE
GREEN
MEN!!!



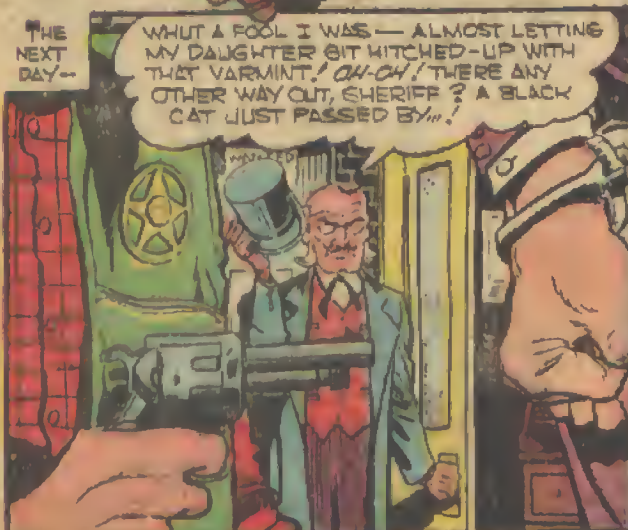
TIM HOLT



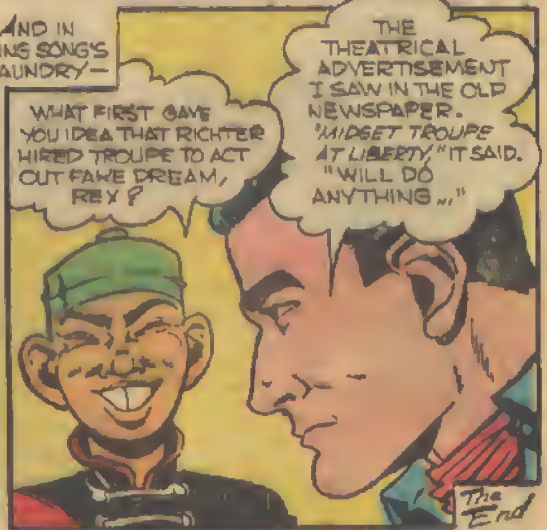
A SHORT
TIME LATER--



THE
NEXT
DAY--



AND IN
SING SONG'S
LAUNDRY--



The
End

FIGHTING



EDITOR!

HE STOOD with the ink still wet on his fingers, a streak of the black printing fluid daubed on a flat-planed cheek. His hair was wet with the perspiration that streaked his shirt. The overhead kerosene lamp shed its yellow radiance down his long, lean body, which did not betray the weariness and bitterness that flooded Emmett Gordon.

"It's a hopeless job," he told the big printing press that occupied most of the room of this little shack that housed the Gila City Bugle. "I can't fight Ed Crangle and his hired killers alone!"

His words still hung in the air when the brick came crashing in through the window. The shattering glass drove him forward, big fists clenched. This is more of Crangle's work! he told himself. He knows what an honest editor with a newspaper can do to his kind! He went out the door and stood on the almost empty street, staring down the dirt thoroughfare toward the blazing lights of the gambling saloon section of town.

A burst of mocking laughter floated out of the darkness. A jeering voice cried, "Get smart, Gordon. Your kind ain't wanted here!"

He wanted to shout at them that he was wanted, that men like Herman Kultz, the grocer, and Rich Magoon, the blacksmith, wanted him. He could tell how badly George Sanders, who operated the furniture store, and Ted Packard, who ran a general goods store, wanted him to stay on and fight Ed Crangle and his thugs.

For he, in his newspaper, was their voice. In it, he could complain about the tactics of gunmen like Slips Morrel, who ramrodded Crangle's crew of killers. Morrel had a habit of buying many things, and charging them, and then never paying. Add to Morrel the other hangers-on who kept the saloons open, and the honest merchants of Gila City suffered daily losses.

The wind was cool on his cheeks that were flushed with anger. "There's a way I could do it," he told the night. "But I've put that way behind me! I've got to turn now to the printed word to get results!"

He turned on a heel and went back inside his shop. He tore out the columns of type and began to reset them, with a furious, driving energy. He composed his editorial as he worked, with a grim hard look to his face, bent over the make-up table.

He ran off a proof and stood with the kerosene lamp glowing down on him, reading what he had composed. It was a good editorial, strong and biting. It demanded a lawman, a lawman such as Bat Masterson had been in Dodge City, or a man like Hickok, or a sheriff like Wyatt Earp. It summoned the honest citizens of Gila City to get together and enforce the law they all loved.

Men like Ed Crangle, backed by killers such as Slips Morrel, made a mockery of any law that Gila City could hope for. All he could do was point out the need of their little city, and hope for action.

* * *

His editorial blew up in his face next day.

He could hear the sullen muttering of the gang from inside his little shop as he worked on the make-up table, laying type from his stick into a form. He lifted his head, and his eyes sharpened.

"They're coming!" he whispered through taut lips. "Crangle's killers! Coming — for me!"

He fought down a sharp desire to run up the narrow stairs to the little room above his shop, and to the iron-clad box that was under his bed. But his teeth clamped down on his lips, and he shook his head.

"No," he said softly. "I gave that up — a long time ago!"

He was standing there, like that, still with his stick of type in a hand, when Slips Morrel and two of his gunthrowing pals came in through the door. Morrel had a Colt in his hand. He gestured at Gordon with it.

"Git over against the wall, Stay there. You move and we'll smash you like we're goin' to smash your paper!"

He put his back to the wall and watched them dump the makeup table, watched the axes come from cover and dig into the wood of his racks. The presses felt the weight of a big sledge hammer. The metal buckled and bent under vicious blows.

There was a fire inside him, Gordon knew. A fire that he had fought in the past three years, a fire that was bursting into a bright, steady blaze as he watched these hoodlums wreck his newspaper. He stood and let the fury rise in him. With a snarl, he came away from the wall with a fist balled and driving into the face of one of the axe-wielders.

He fought like a cornered bobcat. His fists were like sledges. He hammered three men into unconsciousness before Morrel slammed the length of his Colt barrel across his face.

Morrel bent over him and worked on Gordon for ten minutes before he rose. His chest rose and fell with the effort.

"That'll hold him! I busted his nose and mebbe his jaw! If he don't get out of town after this, he'll git more. Come on. We did what we come for. Let's git back to the Star Saloon and wet our throats!"

• • • •

He lay there in his own blood, wracked by the pain that was eating into him. He moaned softly, and stirred. He put a hand to his face, and withdrew his fingers, finding them covered with blood. With his palms flat to the floor, he pushed himself upright, dragging himself to his feet with a hand on his ruined press.

He stared around him.

"They did a good job on the shop," he mumbled through cracked and swollen lips. "They smashed everything I own. All my money was in this paper."

He drew a deep breath. It was not the money that bothered him. With what he had hidden away in the iron-bound box upstairs under his bed, he could always make money. What troubled Emmett Gordon was the fact that this thing could happen in Gila City, and no man could stop it, or prevent it from happening again.

"I have always believed the pen to be mightier than the sword," he said as he moved slowly around the room, examining each bit of smashed furniture and type. His laughter was harsh in the ruin. "It is mightier, too — when you deal with men."

"But Slips Morrel and his gunthrowers are not men! They are animals! And for animals there is only one law — the law of the club!"

Blood came away from his face as he dragged a torn sleeve across it. The sight of the blood altered his face. It grew harder and colder, almost as bleak as the face of Slips Morrel.

On a heel, Emmett Gordon turned and went up the narrow steps to his upstairs room. He walked slowly, planting his feet firmly. He knelt and reached under the bed, and dragged out the iron-bound box.

He threw back the lid, and brought out a pair of Colt revolvers. Colt Peacemakers, they were, with the regulation seven-inch barrels. The walnut butts were worn with much use. He threw the shellbelts around his lean waist and buckled them.

He stood up. The weight of the guns felt good.

"I thought I'd never use them again," he said softly, putting his big hands down to the butts. "I wanted to be a newspaperman, just like Bat Masterson. He was a fighting sheriff. So was I. They don't know me in Gila City. They don't know I can use these guns better than I can a printing press! They don't know me as — Flip Lannon!"

They would know him today! He went down the stairs and out into the sunlight of the street, and step by slow step, he walked down the main street of Gila City toward the Star Saloon.

He went into the saloon, and the batwing doors swung gently behind him. Facing him were Slips Morrel and two of his gunmen.

"You smashed my place, Morrel," Gordon said coldly. "I didn't have my guns then. Let me introduce myself. I'm also known as — Flip Lannon!"

The fear dawned then in Slips Morrel's cold eyes. He backed away from the bar.

"Flip 'em!" whispered Gordon, and his hands dropped.

His guns blazed. Morrel went back into the bar. His two gunmen fell across his body. Gordon stared at them a moment, then waved a smoking gun at the bartender.

"Get out of town. Now! Tell Crangle if he's still here tomorrow morning, I'll be coming for him!"

Gordon turned and went out into the sunlight. He holstered his guns. He could see a group of citizens watching him. Suddenly it came to him that, with their help, he could rebuild his paper. Crangle would leave town. Gila City would grow. And he and his newspaper would grow along with it.

He knew now that he could put his guns back in the iron-bound box. This time they would stay there.

T H E E N D

TIM HOLT

TIM HOLT

THEY WALK A GRIM TRAIL WESTWARD, THESE MEN AND WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF THE ARKWRIGHT WAGON TRAIN. ALONE ON A WASTELAND OF GRASS, WITH THE ENTIRE SIOUX NATION ARRAYED AGAINST THEM—WITH LITTLE WATER AND FEWER BULLETS—DEATH FINDS THEM EASY PICKINGS! EVEN WHEN

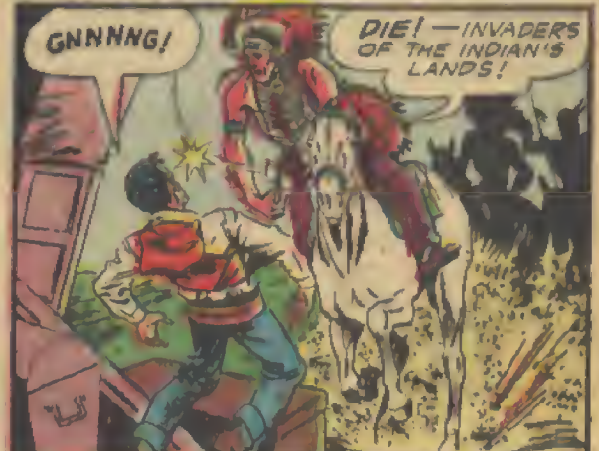
TIM HOLT AND CHITO THROW IN THEIR LOT AND THEIR COLT SIXGUNS WITH THE WAGON TRAIN, THERE SEEMS NO HOPE FOR THOSE WHO WALK THE—

DOOM TRAIL!



THEY RISE UP FROM THE DEEP GRASSES AN HOUR AFTER DAWN, A LONG LINE OF PAINTED FACES AND SCREAMING THROATS—

THIS IS THEIR LEADER—HUNGRY DOG, WAR CHIEF OF THE LAKOTA...



TIM HOLT

SIoux SHARPSHOOTERS AIM AT THE VITAL WATER BARRELS—



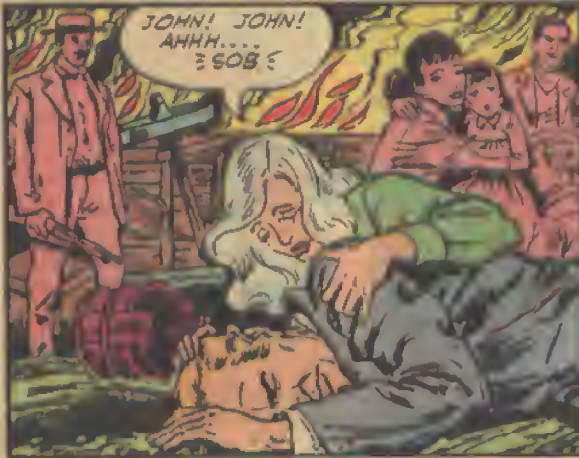
FIRE ARROWS ARCH HIGH AND THUMP INTO DRY, BILLOWING CANVAS—



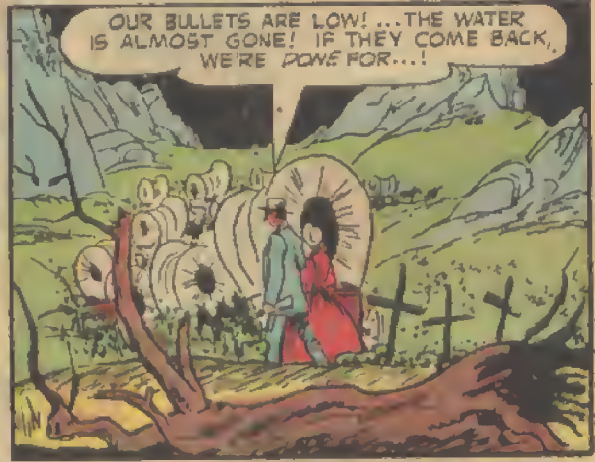
DARING SIOUX WARRIORS RACE IN FOR THE COUPS—



AND THEN, SUDDENLY, THE SIOUX ARE GONE, LEAVING BEHIND THEM DEATH AND BLEAK DESPAIR...



THE WAGONS MOVE ON, LEAVING BEHIND THEM WHITE CROSSES IN THE GRASS...

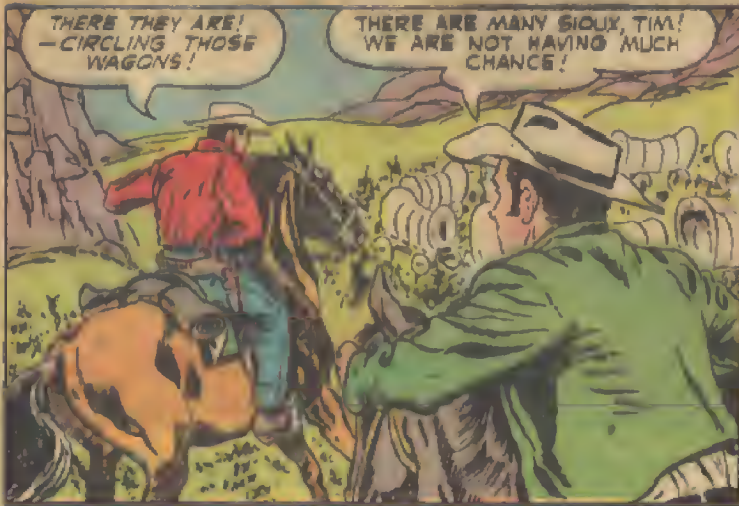


THE TACTICS OF HUNGRY DOG ARE CRUEL. WELL HE KNOWS THERE IS NO HOPE FOR THIS WAGON TRAIN. HE WILL TAKE HIS TIME, AND GIVE HIS YOUNG WARRIORS VALUABLE EXPERIENCE. AN HOUR FROM NIGHTFALL, HE READIES ANOTHER CHARGE—

LESS THAN A MILE AWAY, HIDDEN FROM THE GALLOPING SIOUX BY A RANGE OF FOOTHILLS...



TIM HOLT



LONG LANCE LEAPS FORWARD TOWARD THESE RASH INTRUDERS.



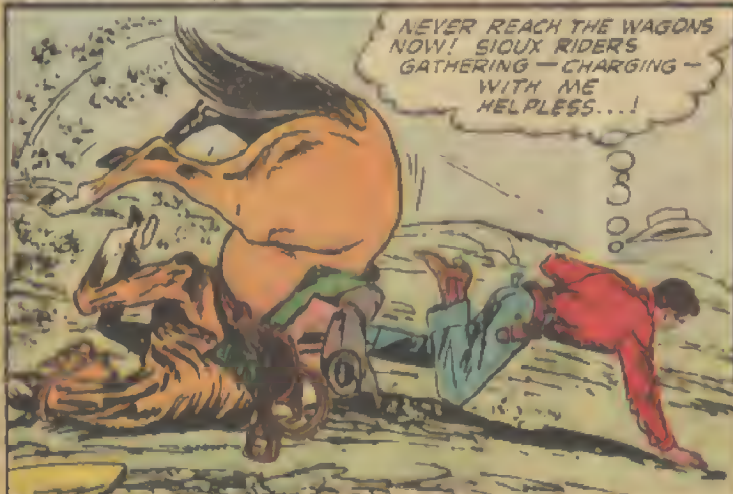
GO ON, CHITO! GET IN AMONG THOSE WAGONS! AT LEAST **ONE** OF US CAN GIVE SOME ADVICE...



WOLF-EATER REINS HIS PINTO TO A SLIDING HALT TO FIRE POINT BLANK AT TIM, BUT TIM'S SIXGUN SPEAKS FIRST...



WOLF EATER FALLS, BUT HIS BULLET BRINGS DOWN TIM'S BRONC-



TIM HOLT

SPRAWLED IN THE DUST AND FURY OF THE SIOUX ATTACK, HALF HIDDEN BY DUST, ABOUT TO BE TRAMPLED BY A HUNDRED HOOFES IS TIM HOLT, CALMLY FIRING HIS GUNS—



A LANCEHEAD SCRAPES HIS SIDE—AND THEN HE IS TWISTING UPWARD, HANDS CATCHING AT A RED THROAT—

AN INSTANT LATER—

GOT A CHANCE, NOW—!

RIFLES CRACK FROM THE WAGONS AS A PONY AND A DISHEVELLED RIDER RACE TOWARD THEM—



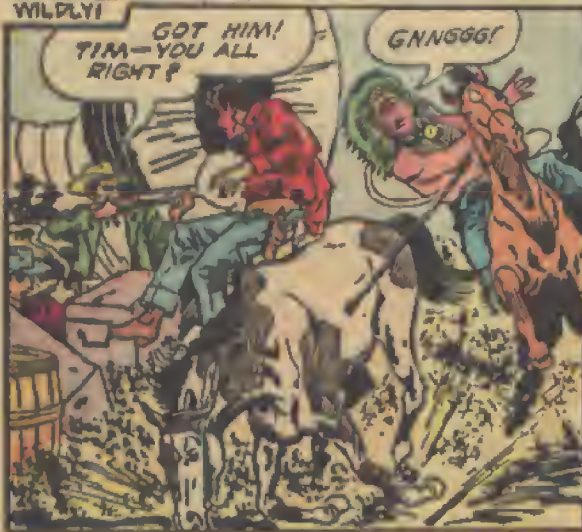
I NEED THIS PONY MORE THAN YOU DO!



COME ON, TIM! WE ARE COVER YOU!

JUST AS HIS PONY IS ABOUT TO CLEAR THE WAGONS, A HURLING SPEAR BRINGS IT DOWN! TIM SPRAWLS WILDLY!

AND THEN THE SWIRL AND SAVAGERY OF THE FIGHT CLOSES IN ON THEM—



GOT HIM! TIM—YOU ALL RIGHT?

GNNGGG!



I'M FINE, CHITO! BUT—NO TIME TO TALK—!

SI! JUST TIME TO—FIGHT!

TIM HOLT

THE SIOUX IS NO BULLDOG FIGHTER. HE RESEMBLES MORE THE WOLF AS HE STRIKES HARD, THEN LEAPS AWAY, TO STRIKE AGAIN LATER! A FEW MOMENTS OF BLISTERING MADNESS AT THE WAGONS, AND THEN—

THEY GO OFF—TO COME BACK AGAIN TOMORROW!

ONE OF 'EM LEFT ME A SOUVENIR!



HERE—LET ME HAVE A LOOK AT THAT SOUVENIR!

THANKS, MA'AM!



MY MOTHER AND FATHER WERE KILLED IN THE LAST FIGHT! I'M MOTHERING MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS. I—I GUESS IT MUST COME EASY TO ME...

????



SUPPOSE I HELP WHILE THE WAGONS ARE BEING READED FOR TRAVEL. HERE, LET'S MAKE A DOLL...

A DOLL? OOOHHH!



WHAT EES COME OVER TIM? I AM MAN WHO FLIRTINGS WITH THE GIRLS!

I'M NOT FLIRTING, CHITO—I'M TRYING TO DISTRACT THEIR MINDS! THESE PEOPLE ARE TERRIFIED! AND FRIGHTENED PEOPLE DON'T MAKE GOOD FIGHTERS!



AND THESE PEOPLE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO FIGHT IF THEY HOPE TO STAY ALIVE! HUNGRY DOG HAS THE FLOWER OF THE SIOUX NATION OUT THERE, WAITING TO RIDE OVER US AND STAMP US INTO THE GROUND!



WITH HOPEFUL WORDS, WITH KIND GESTURES, TIM MOVES AMONG THE IMMIGRANTS...

JUST KEEP YOUR SPIRITS UP! DON'T THINK YOU'RE BEATEN! WE'LL BE ABLE TO PULL THROUGH—SOMEHOW!

TELL ME HOW? WE GOT NO MORE BULLETS!



TIM HOLT

DESPAIR IS ETCHED CLEARLY
IN ANXIOUS FACES —



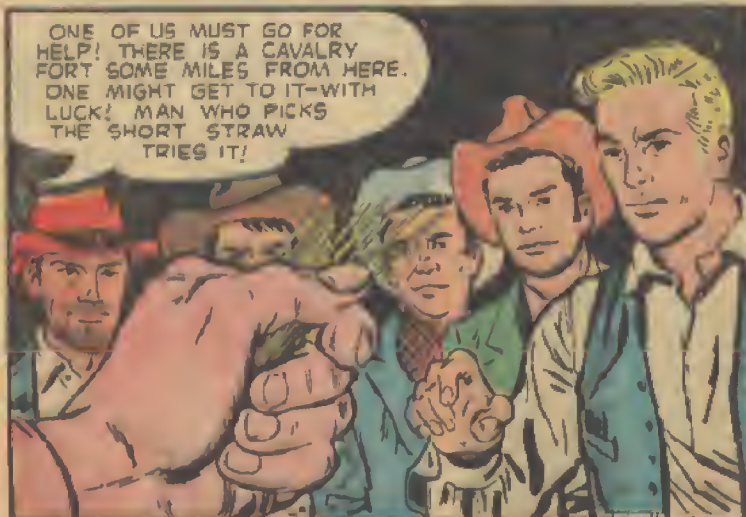
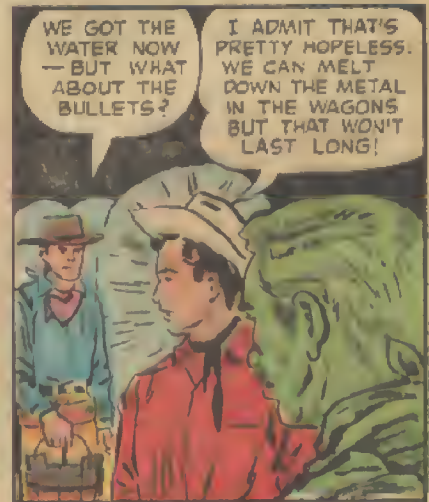
WORRY AND FRIGHT SHOWS IN
EYES THAT ARE GLAZED WITH
FEAR —



AT DAWN, THE WAGONS MOVE ON,
WITH THE PROWLING SIOUX MOVING
IN, ALWAYS A LITTLE CLOSER —



TOWARD NOON, TIM HOLT SIGNALS A HALT —



TIM HOLT

AS DUSK SHROUDS THE PRAIRIES, AND AS THE SIOUX CIRCLE DRAWS CLOSER, TIM SLIPS OUT LIKE A SNAKE THROUGH THE GRASSES...



THEY'LL BE CHARGING IN A MOMENT!



GNNNGG!

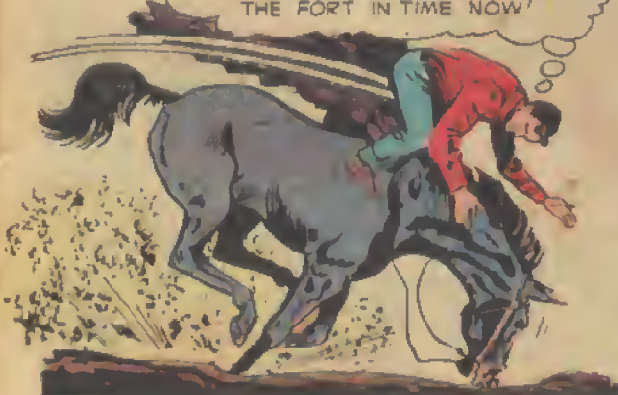
GOT YOU!

THEY WON'T NOTICE ME THE DUSK! AND WITH A GOOD START I CAN GET THROUGH TO THE FORT!



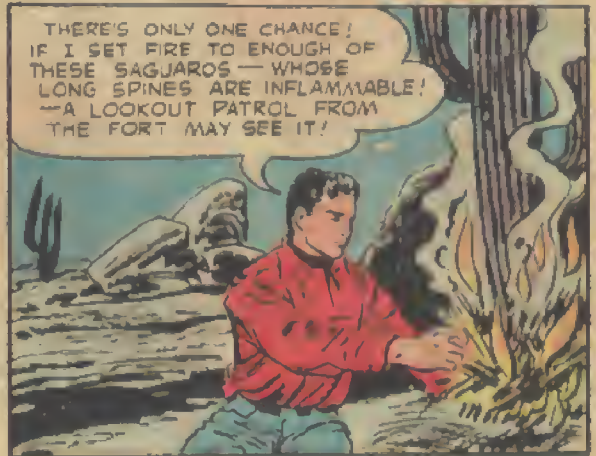
BUT, IN THE DARK, MILES FROM THE WAGON—AND MANY MORE MILES FROM THE FORT—

HE STEPPED IN A GOPHER HOLE! I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO REACH THE FORT IN TIME NOW!



WITH A FLAMING MATCH, TIM SETS FIRE TO A GREAT SAGUARO CACTUS—

THERE'S ONLY ONE CHANCE! IF I SET FIRE TO ENOUGH OF THESE SAGUAROS—WHOSE LONG SPINES ARE INFLAMMABLE!—A LOOKOUT PATROL FROM THE FORT MAY SEE IT!



AN HOUR BEFORE DAWN, A DETAIL OF U.S. CAVALRY RIDE OUT TO INVESTIGATE THE BLAZE.. AT THE GALLOP, THEY STORM ON TOWARD THE BELEAGUERED WAGON TRAIN...

THE SHARP BLAST OF A BUGLE, THE CRACK OF CARBINES, AND THE INDIANS FADE AWAY INTO THE HILLS, LEAVING THE WAGON TRAIN EXHAUSTED—BUT SAFE...

WE'RE IN TIME! THE SIOUX ARE JUST ATTACKING NOW!

LOOKS LIKE

WE ESCAPED WITH ONLY ONE CASUALTY!—LITTLE MARY'S DOLL!

WE CAN FIX THAT! WHEN WE ARRIVE AT THE FORT, I'LL MAKE YOU TWO MORE! NOW, LET'S GET MOVING...



THE END

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WACS

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MARINES

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↓ BACK
VIEW



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